east Sussex (TQ7057) in 2003. The latter three sites were monitored regularly because they represented commercial grower trials to manage dwarf hops without insecticides.

Goater (*British Pyralid Moths*, Harley) notes that *O. nubilalis* was a rare immigrant to the UK before the 1930s, but has since established on waste ground in counties bordering the Thames estuary and in towns along the south coast, almost entirely associated with mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*). Three morphologically indistinguishable strains of *O. nubilalis* occur in continental Europe (Anglade, P. et al., 1984. Intraspecific sex-pheromone variability in the European corn borer, *Ostrinia nubilalis* Hbn. (Lepidoptera, Pyralidae). *Agronomie* **4**: 183-187), with different host ranges, and separable by their responses to different blends of the sex pheromone stereoisomers. In northern France, the E-phenotype infests hops and mugwort and the Z- phenotype maize (Bourguet et al, 1999. La Pyrale maïs dans les houblonnières du Nord. Une race à part? *Phytoma* **517:** 48-49). Therefore, Emmett's warning (*A field guide to smaller British Lepidoptera*, p 217), that *O. nubilalis* could become a pest of maize in UK, may reflect less of a crisis than the proximity between crop and moth might otherwise imply. However, if the phenotype feeding on mugwort in UK is the same as that which infests mugwort and hops in northern France (Bourguet et al, loc cit), a possibility that we are investigating currently, it begs the question; why has *O. nubilalis* apparently not been taken from wild/feral hops in UK in the last 70 years, nor on commercial plantings in the seven years since imidacloprid's introduction?

Ostrinia nubilalis could prove an Achilles heel for dwarf hop growing as currently practised. Tall hops are grown up temporary supports and all potentially infested stems are cut down and destroyed before shoots emerge from the perennating underground rootstocks the following spring. By contrast, dwarf hops are grown up semi-permanent supports, so the stems in which the moths pupate are not removed each year.— COLIN A.M. CAMPBELL and EMMA TREGIDGA, East Malling Research, New Road, East Malling, Kent ME19 6BJ (E-mail colin.campbell@emr.ac.uk)

Northern Arches *Apamea zeta* Tr. ssp. *assimilis* (Doubleday) (Lep.: Noctuidae) discovered in Roxburghshire (vice-county 80)

One individual of the Northern Arches was trapped using a 125-watt mercury vapour Robinson trap at Wester Branxholme Loch, Roxburghshire (O.S. grid reference NT 421110) on 26 July 2004. The trap was operated overnight and emptied shortly after dawn.

This represents a new vice-county record and only the fourth record of this species for southern Scotland (see Mearns & Mearns, *Antea*: 103) of what is more often thought of as a speciality of the Scottish Highlands.

The trap was situated in an area of calcareous fen dominated by Slender Sedge *Carex lasiocarpa*, fringed by willows *Salix* spp. The fen is atypical of the general vegetation in the area. The majority of the Wester Branxholme Loch Site of Special Scientific Interest is an area of wet heath and there are also extensive areas of dry

Heather *Calluna vulgaris* dominated grouse moor and grassy sheep pasture adjacent to the site. It is likely that the moth had travelled from one of these areas of acid vegetation to the trap, as it is associated with these habitats and not with calcareous fen elsewhere in Scotland. The mire is situated in a shallow basin at 270 metres above sea level between Chapelhill (313 metres) and The Steel (326 metres). Although the Northern Arches is thought of as an upland species there are no hills above 400 metres within several kilometres.

The weather on 26 July 2004 was mild and overcast. There was a good catch of 45 species of macrolepidoptera in the single trap. No immigrant species were recorded on that or the three previous nights, when traps were run elsewhere in Roxburghshire. It is probable that the species is breeding in the area, although further records would help to confirm this. It seems likely after this record, and last year's records in Dumfriesshire, that the Northern Arches may turn up in other sites in the Southern Uplands if more light trapping is carried out at moderate to high altitudes.

I would like to thank Bob Palmer for confirming the identity of the specimen and Keith Bland for discussing the idea for this Note.— JEFF WADDELL, Bonavista, Heatheryett, Galashiels, Selkirkshire TD1 2JL.

Ectropis bistortata (Goeze) and *Biston strataria* (Hufn.) in January

Afresh specimen of *Ectropis bistortata* was seen on an oak trunk in the local woodland at Bexley, Kent, on 7 January 2004, a good two months early, during a spell of mild weather. On 28 January 2002, a *Biston strataria* was seen at my garden mv light at Dartford, during a very short spell of mild weather, about a month before its usual emergence period begins here in late February (rather than in March, as formerly). However, this will not have occurred in 2004 with its long spell of very cold weather lasting into March.— B. K. WEST, 56 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

Langmaid's Yellow Underwing *Noctua janthina* (D.&S.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) on Guernsey: a tale of prophecy and hope

On 5 August 1997, David Agassiz, who was staying on the island, generously gave up a morning of his holiday to cycle to my house and go through my collection of microlepidoptera with me. Such was the scale of my misidentifications that he spent considerably longer on the task than he had anticipated, even missing his lunch, but for me it was a most stimulating morning, and two things in particular (apart from how little I knew about micros) have stuck in my memory. First, David brought with him a Pine-tree Lappet *Dendrolimus pini*, a large moth for a microlepidopterist, which he had found in his trap that morning and the first I had ever seen, and, second, he told me about *Noctua janthina* and how he felt it would eventually reach the Channel Islands and that I should keep a watch out for it. He explained how the hindwing differed from that of *Noctua janthe*, the Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing,